

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

 parableoftheprodigalson.blogspot.com/

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Return of the Prodigal Son (1773) by Pompeo Batoni.
Image from:



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_Prodigal_Son

THE TOPIC FOR TODAY IS: CAN YOU LOSE YOUR SALVATION?

Today's bible study is on the parable of the "prodigal son" found in Luke 15:11-31. This parable is probably the most popular and well known of all the **PARABLES IN THE BIBLE**. All verses of scripture are from the Living Bible unless otherwise noted.

DEFINITION -- the word "prodigal" means:

- (1) A person who spends, or has spent, his money, resources, inheritance, etc. in a wasteful, extravagant manner, on things of little or no value, with no regard for the future.
- (2) This kind of person does not invest his money and resources on things (physical or spiritual) that would increase his money and resources (physical or spiritual) for his use, or his family's use, in the future.

FOUNDATIONAL VERSES

1) 2 Timothy 3:16--All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right.

2) 2 PETER 1:20-21

20--Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophets themselves.

21--or because they wanted to prophesy. It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God.

EXPLANATION--the Bible was written by men who were inspired or influenced by God to write what he wanted them to write, not what they wanted to write. The Bible is the Word of God, not the word of men.

3) GALATIANS 1:8-9

8--Let God's curse fall on anyone, including myself, who preaches any other message than the one we told you about. Even if an angel comes from heaven and preaches any other message, let him be forever cursed.

9--I will say it again--if anyone preaches any other gospel than the one you welcomed, let God's curse fall upon that person.

EXPLANATION--the gospel Paul is referring to is the gospel of Jesus Christ. You cannot not add or take anything away, from the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

4) ROMANS 3:22--We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done.

5) EPHESIANS 2:8-9-- (8) Because of his (God's) kindness, you have been saved through trusting Christ. And even trusting is not of yourselves; it too is a gift from God.

(9) Salvation is not a reward for the good we have done, so none of us can take any credit for it.

6) 1 JOHN 5:13-- I have written this to you who believe in the Son of God so that you may know you have eternal life.

7) JEREMIAH 3:15--And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which will feed you with knowledge and understanding. (KJV)

These verses of scripture are the foundational verses of our ministry. You will find these verses in every one of our Bible studies.

INTRODUCTION

1) The parable of the prodigal son, is perhaps, the best known of all of the **PARABLES IN THE BIBLE**.

2) In this parable, God the Father, is represented by a wealthy, earthly father who had two sons. (Most of the teachings or parables in the bible have an earthly and a spiritual aspect.)

3) **THE STORY OF THE PRODIGAL SON** illustrates and proves the principle of "**ETERNAL SALVATION**". Once a person comes to Christ, as his Lord and Savior, he can never lose his salvation.

Our salvation depends on Jesus Christ saving us, not on our efforts to save ourselves or on a church saving us.

4) The Prodigal was a "son". He belonged to the father. When the Prodigal Son decided to leave, the father never rebuked, denied, or condemned his son. This was true even after the son returned home. When the Prodigal returned home, his father accepted back, with no reservations.

5) The Prodigal Son did some major, "BIG TIME" sinning. He spent his inheritance on wine, women, parties, food, gambling, alcohol, drugs, etc. You name it, he probably did it.

6) If this story had taken place in our day, the Prodigal would probably have gone to Las Vegas and spent all of his money in the casinos.

7) When the Prodigal came to his senses, he returned home and the father accepted the him without punishing him or reminding him of what he had done.

THE FATHER NEVER REJECTED OR SCOLDED HIS SON.

6) This parable does not excuse sin. If you are truly saved, you try to live for Christ as best as you can. We are all human and everyone of us sins, but we try to live for the Lord and avoid sin as best as we can.

LUKE 15: 11-31 -- THE STORY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

VERSE 11-- To further illustrate the point, he (Jesus) told them this story: "A man had two sons.

VERSE 12-- When the younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die!' his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

EXPLANATION

1) This man, was a young man--the bible doesn't give his age, but he was a young man, perhaps in his mid to late twenties (my opinion).

2) Evidently, he had become tired of living in his father's house with his father and being under his father's jurisdiction.

3) Notice how "cold blooded" this young man was. He told his father--to his father's face-- that he wanted his inheritance "now" instead of waiting until his father passed away.

This did not seem to surprise the father. Perhaps, the father "saw this coming". Evidently the father knew his son quite well.

4) Hopefully, most of us, would rather have our father instead of our inheritance.

5) The younger son's inheritance could have been several million dollars, in today's currency (USD). (My opinion).

VERSE 13--"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there wasted all his money on parties and prostitutes.

EXPLANATION

1) This young man did not waste any time. He packed his things, and left, for a "distant land" or a "far country". This young man wanted to go far away, where no one knew him, so that he could do whatever he wanted to do. If he would have lived today, he probably would have gone to Las Vegas.



Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas sign, Image from:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_Vegas_Boulevard

2) The young man wasted his money on parties, food, alcohol, clothes, prostitutes, gambling, drugs, etc. He probably had a lot of "friends" during this time, as he was spending a lot of money having a "good time".



IMAGE FROM: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food>

VERSE 14--About the time his money was gone, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve.

EXPLANATION

- 1) Evidently, this young man was not wise enough to measure the spending of his money. He spent his money like he owned a money printing press, a bank or like there was no tomorrow.
- 2) Another point to consider is that he didn't invest his money in a business or something of value. He didn't place any of his money in a bank where it would earn interest. He didn't buy any land and place cattle on the land. He didn't invest in a business. In other words, the prodigal son did nothing to earn any income while he was in the "far country". This was incredibly short sighted of him.
- 3) To make matters worse, a "great famine" swept over the land. It wasn't just any famine, but a "BIG TIME FAMINE". God did not send this famine just for the benefit of the Prodigal Son. The famine was something that happened but God used it to bring the Son to his senses.
- 4) The young man, out of money, began to feel hunger pangs. Notice that none of his "friends" from his party days, were around to help him.

VERSE 15--He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs.

EXPLANATION = the young man had to "persuade" a farmer to give him a job feeding the farmer's pigs. The young man was Jewish. Feeding pigs must have been very distasteful to him.

VERSE 16--The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the swine looked good to him. And no one gave him anything.

EXPLANATION

- 1) The Prodigal was so hungry that he even considered eating the food he was feeding the pigs.
- 2) No one cared for the young man, not even the "friends" he had made when he spent so much money on them during his "party" days. Friends like that never last. As soon as the money is gone, they leave.

VERSE 17--"When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired men have food enough and to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger!

EXPLANATION

- 1) When he "finally came to his senses" the young man understood what he had when he was in his father's house. The father's servants had plenty of food to eat and were living much better than he was.

VERSE 18-- I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you,

VERSE 19--and am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man."

EXPLANATION = the son decided that he would be better off if he would repent of his foolishness, return to his father's house, and ask his father to hire him as a servant, as he was no longer considered himself worthy to be his father's son. He just wanted a job as a servant in his father's house.

VERSE 20--"So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming, and was filled with loving pity and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

EXPLANATION

- 1) How did the young man get home? He had no money. Where did he get something to eat? In those days, people didn't have cars or pickup trucks. There were no bus lines, rail roads or airplanes. The Bible doesn't tell us but God must have helped him get home.
- 2) The father saw and recognized the young man while the Prodigal Son was a long distance down the road. Evidently, the Father, was looking for his son, probably every day the young man was gone.
- 3) The son's clothes were ragged and dirty. The young man hadn't taken a bath in a while but the father "ran" to him and embraced his son. This is a picture of God the Father wanting to "run" to us and embrace us when we repent of our sin and return home to him.

4) In the Middle East of that day, it was considered "inappropriate" for a grown man to run. However, this father did not care what people thought about him. When he saw his son coming down the road, he ran to his son and welcomed him home.

VERSE 21--"His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and you, and am not worthy of being called your son—'

EXPLANATION

1) The boy didn't ask for anything, he was just glad to be home and was willing to work as a "hired hand" for his father. He confessed his sin to his father and declared that he no longer considered himself worthy to be a son to his father. The son no longer had any pride left in him.

VERSE 22--"But his father said to the slaves, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. And a jeweled ring for his finger; and shoes!

EXPLANATION

1) The father did not let the son finish speaking. The father ordered his slaves to bring the "finest robe" in the house--not just any old robe would do for his son, a ring, and shoes for the son (who was probably barefoot).

VERSE 23--And kill the calf we have in the fattening pen. We must celebrate with a feast,

EXPLANATION

In those days, wealthy people kept calves, kid goats, lambs, etc. in pens to fatten them up to be butchered whenever they wanted to celebrate an event. The father orders his slaves to butcher and roast (BBQ in our day) the calf they have in the fattening pen.

VERSE 24--for this son of mine was dead and has returned to life. He was lost and is found. So the party began.

EXPLANATION

The son wasn't "dead" in a physical sense, but he had left his father's home and care. The father couldn't care and provide for the son as long as the son was away from his father. When the son returned home to his father, the father could now care and provide for his son.

THE PRODIGAL SON'S OLDER BROTHER

VERSE 25--"Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music coming from the house,

EXPLANATION

Notice that the older son was in the fields working. He wasn't laying around, or "hanging out somewhere", or wasting his father's money. He was "working in his father's fields".

Working in the fields is hard work, even today. Working in the fields in those days, was hard, physical work.

The older son, was the son of a very wealthy man. He could have sat around all day, sipping tea or a coke in the shade. He could have gone hunting and fishing with his friends, or he could have hung out in a pool hall but, he was out in the fields, working for his father. This is to be considered when weighing the character of the older brother.

VERSE 26--and he asked one of the servants what was going on.

VERSE 27--"Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the calf we were fattening and has prepared a great feast to celebrate his coming home again unharmed.'

VERSE 28-- "The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him,

EXPLANATION

When the older brother was told that his younger brother had returned home and that their father had thrown a party to celebrate the younger son's return, the older brother became angry and would not enter their home to celebrate the return of his brother.

The older son did wrong by refusing to rejoice and participate in the party that his father had given for his brother.

In a way, you can't blame the older brother for his bad attitude. After all, his younger brother had just "blown" millions of dollars of his father's money.

The older brother may have thought that their father would now give half of his inheritance to the younger son.

Whatever the older brother thought, his reaction was wrong. He should have rejoiced over the return of his younger brother. It is easy for us to say this about the older brother, but, our attitude would probably have been the same as his attitude.

VERSE 29--but he replied, 'All these years I've worked hard for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to do; and in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends.

VERSE 30--Yet when this son of yours comes back after spending your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the finest calf we have on the place.'

EXPLANATION

The older son had never wasted his father's money and had spent all of his life working for his father. Evidently the father had never given the older son even a goat that he could BBQ with his friends. From an earthly standpoint, the older son made sense in his view of what had happened.

However, the older brother still should have rejoiced over the return of his brother.

VERSE 31--"Look, dear son,' his father said to him, 'you and I are very close, and everything I have is yours.

EXPLANATION

THE OLDER SON

Notice how the father addresses the older son as my "dear son". He wasn't just a son, he was a "dear son". Some have said that the older son was lost, but I don't believe this. The older son was a "dear son", he was "very close" to his father and, "everything" the father had, belonged to the older son.

THE YOUNGER SON

The Prodigal Son never lost his salvation. He was always a son to his Father, who never rejected him, no matter what he had done.

He lost his reward for living the life of sin that he had lived but he never lost his salvation. His Father never rejected him, no matter what he had done.

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, God the Father will never reject you, no matter what you do. God doesn't want us to live in sin. This should be obvious to everyone.

Christ on the Cross, by Carl Heinrich Bloch, showing the skies darkened. Image from:



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion_of_Jesus

Of all the parables in the Bible, the parable of the prodigal son is certainly one of the most interesting and the most well known.

Sermon on the Mount by Carl Bloch. Image from:



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermon_on_the_Mount

CONCLUSION

a) If you have found this Bible study on Moses and the Promised Land in our Online Bible Commentary interesting and/or informative, please share it with other people.

b) BIBLES used to write this book of Jude Bible study were:

- 1) King James Version
- 2) The Living Bible

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